

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 NSCE-00 MCT-01 SP-02 L-03
TRSE-00 HA-05 SSO-00 INRE-00 ICAE-00 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01 FBIE-00 SY-05 JUSE-00
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-----120879 260223Z /70/62

O R 242213Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9318
INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y F O R P A R A F O U R

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV SHUM CI
SUBJECT: LETELIER/MOFFITT ASSASSINATION

REF: SANTIAGO 3337

1. WITH EXCEPTION OF "EL MERCURIO", SANTIAGO PRESS
COVERAGE OF THE CURRENT VISIT OF U.S. ATTORNEY EUGENE
PROPPER AND FBI AGENTS ROBERT SCHERER AND CARTER CORNICK
IS ACQUIRING AN INCREASINGLY SENSATIONALIST TOUCH. THE
TREND BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER CORNICK AND SCHERER ARRIVED,
WITH "ULTIMAS NOTICIAS" BANNER HEADLINES MAY 20 READING
"FBI GO HOME". IN THE LAST TWO DAYS, MOST DAILIES HAVE
HEADLINED THE REQUEST BY TOWNLEY LAWYER MANUEL ACUNA THAT
THE TWO FBI AGENTS BE SUMMONED TO TESTIFY BEFORE THE
THIRD CRIMINAL COURT JUDGE, CARMEN CANALES, INVESTIGATING
POSSIBLE IRREGULARITIES IN THE TOWNLEY EXPULSION, AND
THAT AN ORDER BE ISSUED PREVENTING THE PAIR FROM LEAVING
CHILE UNTIL THEY TESTIFY. TODAY'S "LA SEGUNDA"
REPORTS THAT JUDGE CANALES HAS ISSUED AN ORDER FOR
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OHE PAIR TO DECLARE IN WRITING WITHIN 48 HOURS.
SHE HAS RECOGNIZED THEIR DIPLOMATIC STATUS AND
IS NOT REQUIRING THEM TO APPEAR PERSONALLY. WEEKLY
"QUE PASA" MAGAZINE, WHICH APPEARED TODAY, SPORTS A
FRONT-PAGE FACIAL PHOTO OF THE U.S. ATTORNEY WITH THE
QUESTION "WHO'S AFRAID OF PROPPER?"

2. MOST OF THE MEDIA HAS CONSISTENTLY SPECULATED THAT THE PROPPER VISIT WILL BRING A REQUEST FOR EXTRADITION OF CHILEAN OFFICIALS, INCLUDING EX-DINA HEAD MANUEL CONTRERAS. THE NEW YORK TIMES STORY MAY 23, REPORTING THAT PROPPER WOULD SEEK THE EXTRADITION OF CONTRERAS AND TWO EX-DINA OFFICERS, IDENTIFIED AS LT COL PEDRO ESPINOZA AND CAPTAIN ARMANDO FERNANDEZ, WAS CARRIED BY MOST DAILIES HERE. TODAY'S "SEGUNDA" QUOTES DEFENSE MINISTRY SOURCES AS DENYING THE EXISTENCE OF LT COL PEDRO ESPINOZA, BUT REPORTS THAT IT LEARNED ELSEWHERE THAT THE PRESENT COMMANDER OF A REGIMENT IN PUNTA ARENAS IS A COLONEL PEDRO ESPINOZA.

3. LAWYER ALFREDO ETCHEBERRY TOLD THE PRESS MAY 23 THAT PROPPER WAS ASKING NOTHING FROM THE CHILEAN COURTS, THAT HIS VISIT WAS ONLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF OBTAINING FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CASE.

4. IN VIEW OF THE MOUNTING PRESSURES BY THE PRESS AND PUBLIC OPINION, THE EMBASSY FELT COMPELLED TO ISSUE THE FOLLOWING PRESS RELEASE: BEGIN TEXT: IN RESPONSE TO SOME OF THE SPECULATION THAT HAS APPEARED IN THE PRESS, MR. PROPPER STATED TODAY THAT HE AND THE FBI AGENTS ARE HERE IN CHILE IN CONNECTION WITH THE LETELIER CASE AND WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. "NEITHER I NOR THE FBI HAS AUTHORITY TO CONDUCT ANY INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION IN CHILE AND OUR WORK HERE IS DONE WITH THE COOPERATION OF CHILEAN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS," MR. PROPPER SAID. "CHILEAN OFFICIALS HAVE TRAVELLED TO THE U.S. INVESTIGATING THE LETELIER CASE AND WERE AFFORDED THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES THERE," HE ADDED. TO CLEAR UP ANY CONFUSION THAT MAY EXIST IN THE PRESS, MR. PROPPER IS STAYING AT THE RESIDENCE OF AMBASSADOR LANDAU DURING HIS VISIT TO SANTIAGO. MR. PROPPER'S ASSOCIATE AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT, E. LAWRENCE BARCELLA, IS STAYING AT THE HOTEL SHERATON SAN CRISTOBAL. FBI AGENTS SCHERRER AND CORNICK ENTERED CHILE WITH DIPLOMATIC PASSPORTS AND DIPLOMATIC VISAS. THEY WILL RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS POSED BY THE CHILEAN JUDICIARY THROUGH APPROPRIATE DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS AND ARE PREPARED TO COOPERATE IN ANY WAY WITH THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT. END TEXT. LANDAU

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